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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO IRAN COLLECTIVE

S E C R E T STATE 047326

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2034

TAGS: PINR IR

SUBJECT: (SBU) QUESTIONS ON REMOVAL OF ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS AND ART FROM TEHRAN'S BUILDINGS (C-NE9-00993)

Classified By: SUZANNE MCCORMICK, DIR., INR/OPS. REASON: 1.4(C).

¶1. (C/NF) WASHINGTON ANALYSTS ARE HIGHLY INTERESTED IN CONFIRMING A REPORT REGARDING AN IRANIAN GOVERNMENT DECISION TO REMOVE ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS AND ART FROM TEHRAN'S BUILDINGS. THIS DECISION WAS REPORTED IN AN AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (AFP) ARTICLE ON 7 APRIL AND THE US-BASED IRAN TIMES ON 17 APRIL 2009. THESE CHANGES COULD REPRESENT AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR ON TEHRAN'S VIEWS TOWARDS ENGAGEMENT WITH THE US AND FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE EFFORT AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THE DECISION, POSTS' TIME AND RESOURCES PERMITTING, WOULD BE VERY VALUABLE.

¶A. (U) WHAT, IF ANY, ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS AND MURALS ARE CURRENTLY BEING REPLACED IN TEHRAN, INCLUDING THOSE IN AZADI SQUARE AND THE "DOWN WITH AMERICA" MURAL ON KARIM KHAN AVENUE? WHAT, IF ANY, PLANS ARE THERE TO REPLACE SUCH MURALS?

¶B. (U) IF THERE ARE PLANS TO REPLACE THE MURALS, WHO AUTHORIZED THEM? WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THE MURAL REPLACEMENT PLAN?

1) (U) THE AFP ARTICLE MENTIONS MOHAMMAD REZA SHARIF KAZEMI AS THE CITY OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF THE PROJECT, WHAT IS HIS POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT?

2) (U) HOW MANY MURALS WILL BE REPLACED?

¶C. (U) WHAT, IF ANY, PLANS ARE THERE TO EXTEND THE MURAL REPLACEMENT TO CITIES BESIDES TEHRAN?

¶D. (U) HOW WIDELY HAS THE DECISION TO REMOVE THE ART BEEN PUBLISHED IN IRANIAN PRESS?

¶E. (U) WHAT HAS BEEN THE REACTION OF THE IRANIAN PUBLIC/PRESS TO THE DECISION?

¶F. (U) WHAT, IF ANY, ROLE HAS TEHRAN MAYOR QALIBAF PLAYED IN THIS DECISION? TEHRAN CITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN CHAMRAN? PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD? SUPREME LEADER KHAMENEI? RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN QOM?

¶G. (U) WHAT, IF ANY, DEBATE IS THERE AMONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON THIS EFFORT? WHAT ARE THE ARGUMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL LEADERS (PLEASE IDENTIFY) EITHER FOR OR AGAINST THE PLAN?

¶2. (U) PLEASE CITE C-NE9-00993 IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF REPORTING IN RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS.  
CLINTON